

VZCZCXRO8082  
OO RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHNP RUEHROV  
DE RUEHAK #2197 3661632  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
O 311632Z DEC 08  
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8362  
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU IMMEDIATE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T ANKARA 002197

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/SE, NEA/IPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/30/2023

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IS](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY PUSHING FOR "END OF HOSTILITIES" IN GAZA

Classified By: DCM Doug Silliman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (S) The Ambassador on December 31 discussed PM Erdogan's diplomatic efforts to end the military conflict in Gaza with Turkish PM Foreign Policy Adviser Ahmet Davutoglu and separately with MFA U/S Apakan. Davutoglu was preparing to depart with PM Erdogan for Amman and Damascus, followed by consultations in Riyadh and in the coming days. Davutoglu and Apakan said they thought US views generally were compatible with Turkish goals. The Turks are pushing for an immediate cease fire, which they called an "end-of-hostilities." They also want a "cooling off period" of several days, humanitarian access to Gaza, reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah, a diplomatic approach to the problem and the region, and some sort of monitoring force, UN or US preferably, but definitely not/not EU.

¶2. (S) Ambassador said the Turkish plan sounded generally similar to our approach, but that we had to stay in close touch. He told Davutoglu and Apakan that the US is not prepared for a monitoring mission for all the reasons they know well. He also covered the failures of the Saudis and others to reconcile Hamas and Fatah, and how these efforts always broke down over the Hamas refusal to endorse non-violence, recognition of Israel, and acknowledgment of past agreements. Were a Palestinian reconciliation to occur without Hamas signing on to these principles, it would create a major problem between the Israelis and Abu Mazen, and we would all be even worse off. Apakan knew the history as well or better than the Ambassador, and said "of course" one condition of any reconciliation would be Hamas recognition of the principles.

¶3. (S) In a second conversation with Apakan later on December 31, Apakan said that there should also be a return to a process in which the international community is working toward Palestinian statehood. MFA Middle East Deputy Director General Omer Onhon added that the emerging differences among Arab governments are deepening and contributing to the crisis. Moderate regimes like Egypt and Fatah are increasingly under pressure. Erdogan's trip to Damascus, Amman, Cairo and Riyadh is an attempt to bridge these differences: Erdogan will tell Arab leaders that now is the time for unity.

¶4. (S) Apakan reiterated that Turkey had not forgotten that Hamas rocket attacks are responsible for the breakdown of the ceasefire on December 19. Israel is a friendly country. Turkey is unhappy with Israeli actions, but diplomatic channels remain open. Presidents Gul and Perez were talking right now. Israeli Ambassador to Turkey Levy would be seeing Apakan immediately after the Ambassador's meeting, and FMs

Babacan and Livni have spoken. Turkey is urging Israel not to conduct a ground incursion into Gaza -- it would expand the scope of armed conflict, have serious political ramifications and ultimately threaten Israel's security. The Middle East is in a "transitional period and a fragile situation" ahead of a new US administration, and Israel should present no surprises. Turkey will also reemphasize to Israel the need for diplomacy in the case of Iran. Israel should give the new US administration a chance and not expand conflicts in the region now. Ambassador said the US would not object to Turkey making the point on Iran with the Israelis, but urged that we remain focused on Gaza.

15. (S) Comment: We will need to watch this, as the Turks have been starry-eyed in the past and have let Hamas off the hook.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at  
<http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:Turkey>

Jeffrey